795 Russia. *Only one Bishop*—Paltarokas—was known to be *alive in* 1948, and no information regarding his present fate is available. Administrators who succeeded the martyred Bishops likewise "vanish" in MVD trucks soon after their appointment.

The official Registers of the Church, cited by the Rev. Dr. Kazys Gečys in his "Catholic Lithuania" (*Katalikiškoji Lietuva*, Chicago 1946) gave the following statistics for the year 1940:

Diocese	Deaneries	Priests	Byzantine Rite Priests	Divinity Students	Monastic Orders: Priests	Priors	Nuns	Parishioners
Vilnius	16	307	5	169	62	184	384	877,838
Kaunas	10	289	2	152				500,000
Kaišiadorys	9	163						220,200
Panevėžys	10	235						418,950
Telšiai	12	237		83	90	387	579	385,872
Klaipėda Prelacy		11						22,150
Vilkaviškis	12	245		62				351,405
Total	69	1,487	7	470	152	571	963	2,776,422

The total number of clergy, including those of the Byzantine rite, was 1646. One priest was available to minister 1688 souls. The 1586 members of monastic congregations, included the Franciscan, Jesuit, Salesian, Dominican and Marian Orders, and several exclusively Lithuanian Orders.

794 The same author provided the following statistics regarding the number of churches as of 1940.

Diocese	Arch-Cathedral Basilicas	Cathedral Basilicas	Cathedrals	Parish Churches	Filial Churches	Non-Parochial Churches	Chapels
Vilnius		1		185 +Byz. 7	17	34	110
Kaunas	1			91	31	34	84
Kaišiadorys			1	65	2		12
Panevėžys			1	90	27	7	82
Telšiai			1	111	16	14	32
Klaipėda Prelacy				5		2	
Vilkaviškis			1	93	5		10
Total	1	1	4	670 +Byz. 7	98	91	330

A total of 1202 churches, embracing 681 parishes. Each church served 2310 souls.

In addition to the Roman Catholic community, Lithuania had 51 churches and chapels with 18 pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, 12 Calvinist (Evangelical Reformed Church) parishes with 7 pastors, 3217 independent sectarians (mostly ex-Lutherans), five Tatar Mohammedan congregations (at Vilnius, 40-Tatars, Kaunas, Reižiai and Vinkšniukai), and two Karaim congregations. Statistics are not available regarding Jewish religious communities.

652 For services rendered in keeping birth, matrimonial and burial records, the state budget of Lithuania for 1939 appropriated the following sums in Litas (1 Litas equaled $0.10 in gold or $0.16⅔ depreciated):

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Roman Catholic Church	Lt.	1,383,278
Israelite Congregation	"	105,500
Evangelical Lutheran Church	"	88,000
Evangelical Reformed Church	"	26,360
Greek Orthodox Church	"	60,360
Old Believers Congregation	"	31,920
Mohammedan Congregation	"	2,400
Karaim Congregation	"	400
Total	Lt.	1,691,718 ($169,171.80 gold or $281,483.86 current exchange rate)

794 Comparison of the situation of the Catholic Church in 1940 with that shown in a *Tass* bulletin of April 1947 and the information provided by the Lithuanian underground resistance movement as of 1948, tells a very eloquent story:

	1940	*Tass* 1947	1948
Archbishops and Bishops	14	2	1
Clergy	1,846	1,332	400
Monastic Order members	1,586	0	0
Churches	1,202	711	ca. 600
Parishioners	2,776,422	"thousands"	most of survivors
Theological Seminaries	4	1	0
Catholic Faculty in Univ.	1	0	0
State assistance	Lt. 1,383,278	0	Ruinous Taxes
Church Taxation	0	?	millions of rubles
Divinity Students	470	ca. 150	0
Killed or exiled clergymen	0	(silence)	75%
Catholic press 1955: number	52	(silence)	0
circulation	7,050,200	(silence)	0
Religious-philosophy books	209	(silence)	0
Sodality-Fraternity Members	800,000	(silence)	0

Naturally, the underground data does not disclose clandestine catechetic instruction by clergymen and laymen, and the secret religious press. Religious books and articles bring highest prices in the black market. All of the Catholic scientific, educational, social, athletic, labor, economic, publishing and charitable institutions, academies, schools, libraries, kindergartens, associations, sodalities, etc., were closed and their property was confiscated by the Russians.

Attempts to Create a "National MVD Church"

795 The Russian Orthodox Church is, to all intents and purposes, a branch of the secret political police—the MVD and MGB. This Church is the only religious organization tolerated in Russia, allotted newsprint and printing facilities, and sponsored by Soviet agents in the annexed and satellite countries. "Archbishop" Sergius had been sent to Lithuania in 1940 to subvert the Greek Orthodox Church of the country. This notorious personality ultimately became an agent of the Gestapo and was liquidated by the Gestapo just before the second Russian invasion. The remaining Russian Orthodox clergymen are docile and loyal servants of the MVD-MGB, inspired in part by a Russian nationalism. The few Orthodox people of Lithuania have no respect for them.

When the Protestants practically disappeared from Lithuania and the few thousand native Jews remaining in the country (some 3,000 plus about 15,000 imported Russian aliens of Jewish race) enlisted in the Soviet service, the only religious opposition is the Roman Catholic Church—which consists of at least 90%

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661 Priests were repeatedly summoned and urged to break with "the fascist Vatican"—or be imprisoned for "espionage" and contact with "the Vatican intelligence." In several parishes pastors were arrested and apostate priests installed, without the Bishop's blessing. Bishop's representatives were barred. Local communist officials became ardent and regular "church-goers"—but no one else went there and the Russian venture died a natural death.

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794 Finally, the Soviet authorities engaged in what may be *the final duel* between the Church and the militant atheism: decrees were published placing all "cultural monuments," viz. church structures, under the supervision of the government. The authorities attempt to impose the so-called *"dvadsatkas"*—committees of 20 members—on each parish to supervise the needs for repairs, pastor's functions, etc. One half of these committeemen are appointed by the government. As to the rest—no specific regulations are disclosed. These "committees" would have the power to dismiss pastors and accept replacements—in effect, they would nullify the episcopal authority and would control every activity of the faithful. To further weaken the opposition, the Bishops were seized and incoming administrators subjected to pressure and deprived of the means of communicatnig with the parishes.

The faithful realize the objective—the clandestine press forewarned them and coupled threats of reprisals against weakening persons together with the explanation of the real meaning of the Russian action. Under such strained conditions, churches go unrepaired rather than enjoy "government assistance" in exchange for acceptance of a *"dvadsatka."* Priests summoned before the MVD refer the officials to the Canonic Law of the Church and direct the Russians to discuss the matter with the Bishops.

A native traitor and atheist, Gailevičius, a former superintendent of NKVD prisons, is presently the "Commissar for Cult Affairs of the Lithuanian SSR." In January 1949 he published a decree in his capacity as custodian of "cultural monuments": churches must not "operate" within 7 kilometers of each other, and if several churches are found within the 7 km. radius, only one church is to be left "operating" and the other churches are to be shut down for use by the state.

In theory, this decree could scarcely affect rural churches. An intolerable situation is arising in cities, however. For instance, there are 17 churches and several chapels in the city of Kaunas. Under this decree, only one church would remain in this city of 150,000 inhabitants, of whom 60% are Lithuanian Catholics. A similar situation is bound to arise in the capital city of Vilnius with its dozens of beautiful churches, or "cultural monuments."

Serious clashes, or rather massacres of women and children, are expected to result during the forcible seizure and closing of the churches to which the foreign invader has no title.

The Italian press recently cited "reliable sources" of January 1949 to the effect that the Russians had confiscated the Cathedral Basilica of Vilnius and converted the edifice into a dance hall. This cannot be verified from Lithuanian sources at this time—but the Gailevičius decree makes this news probable.

Mockery by Soviet Embassy in Washington

000 The *USSR Information Bulletin* of the Soviet Embassy in Washington in its issue of 25 February 1949 carries a questionable "Interview with Catholic Priest." Father "Kasimir Kulakas, Dean of the Trakai diocese," was said to have been interviewed by one Josas Bulota (should be Juozas Bulota).

This tendentious compilation of lies was obviously written by a Russian ignorant of Catholic terminology and the geography of Lithuania.

It begins with the statement that in the "diocese" of the Rev. Kulakas the parishioners "attend services in 11 Catholic churches." In 1940, the Lithuanian section of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, embracing Trakai, had 185 Catholic churches, plus 7 of the Eastern rite.

The claim that "religion is not taught in the schools, but priests may give religious teaching to children outside school" is far from the truth, as the situation in the Vilnius Archdiocese (lately administered by the Rev. Kačergis) does no. differ from that in any other part of the country—as told in the preceding columns.

The alleged "interview" attributes to the Rev. Kulakas a vague statement that "the number of priests in my diocese in proportion to the number of parishioners, is sufficient—they are no fewer than in pre-Soviet times."—With more than one-third of the Catholic population of the Vilnius diocese deported and all the priests of Polish nationality repatriated to Poland—the Russians would make us believe that there "are no fewer than in pre-Soviet times" and that the number of priests is "sufficient," for the time being, ●794 in the view of the MVD. . . . There had been 192 parish churches and 312 priests in the Archdiocese of Vilnius in 1940—compared with the 11 churches indicated by the Soviet Embassy in February 1949. . . .

The statement that "a total of 150 clergymen is studying at Kaunas Theological Seminary at present" —is sheer fiction, as the seminary was forcibly shut down in 1948. The professors enumerated in the article—are all in prisons or in Siberia since 1947.

"Priests in Soviet Lithuania pay an income tax on the same conditions as the members of the professions, such as doctors, artists and lawyers. No one may tax a priest more than the law provides."—But there are no free professions under the Soviet rule! Doctors and artists are on state payrolls, and former lawyers are cutting timber in Siberia or digging mines in the Arctic, inasmuch as the MVD provides its own "investigators" from six-month classes where no legal training is 651 given. Churches are taxed 40,000 to 160,000 rubles—while workers earn not more than 450 rubles monthly. . . . As for the Soviet "law"—Soviet officials follow the Mandarine rule: the sky is the limit—and Stalin lives far away. . . .

"The clergy can be prosecuted for anti-State activities under the laws that apply to all other citizens, but there has never been an instance in which a priest was prosecuted for his profession, nor for carrying out his duties as his calling requires." — But no statistics were given pertinent to prosecution "for anti-State activities" as of to date. Numerous NKVD files brought out by a number of Lithuanian Catholic priests imprisoned and tortured for nothing but their priesthood—are now available in the United States. . . .

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The Situation Of The Church In Enslaved Lithuania

Moscow Boasts

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The Information Bulletin of the Soviet Embassy in Washington (April 30), in its "Notes on Soviet Life," describes the alleged freedom of religion in Lithuania:

The position of the Roman Catholic Church in Soviet Lithuania was described in a recent statement by the Most Reverend Mgr. Reinis, Catholic Archbishop of Vilnius.

"The Catholic Church enjoys perfect freedom in Soviet Lithuania," he told a Tass correspondent. "The local authorities are assisting us in restoring and repairing churches destroyed by the German invaders, and supplying building materials. Our clergy are provided with all necessities.

"There are at present two archbishoprics in Lithuania," Mgr. Reinis went on to explain, "those of Vilnius and Kaunas. The Catholic Church organization has remained unchanged. All 711 churches are functioning with their staffs of 1,332 clergy. The Kaunas Ecclesiastical Seminary, headed by the prominent theologian Ventukas, is graduating scores of young Catholic priests annually. Thousands of believers in Vilnius, Kaunas and other towns and villages gather as usual at Matins and Vespers. All established holidays are observed by the Church."

The Reality

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Before the Russian aggression in 1940, there were 6 dioceses in Lithuania (Archbishoprics of Vilnius and Kaunas, Bishoprics of Kaišiadorys, Panevėžys, Telšiai and Vilkaviškis) and the Klaipėda-Memel Prelacy. Lithuania had three archbishops and seven bishops, including one for the armed forces. There were four theological seminaries (Vilnius, Kaunas, Telšiai and Vilkaviškis) with 850 divinity students. There were Catholic and Protestant Theology-Philosophy Faculties in the Kaunas University, and a goodly number of private denominational high schools and other institutions of learning. A Catholic Academy of Arts and Sciences functioned and a Catholic University was in the process of formation. There were 800 parishes, with about 900 churches and chapels, 1,600 priests, and numerous convents, monasteries and congregations.

000 AND NOW? . . .

The Soviet Bulletin gives the latest statistics: "The Catholic Church organization has remained unchanged . . . 711 churches . . . 1,332 clergy . . . The Kaunas Ecclesiastical Seminary . . . two archbishoprics."

The Soviet Embassy conveniently omits the information regarding the fate of the bishops (of whom only three are probably in the country), the three missing seminaries, 300 priests, and the introduction of *numerus clausus* for divinity students: 150 for a nation of three million. . . The following article by a prominent Catholic layman, a university professor who lived through both Russian occupations and is now a refugee in Germany, will demonstrate bolshevik

2:Anonymous U-. (no date)1947 RB5 Lithuanians !

793 ing Holy Mass. With his hands tied behind his back, he was pushed into an auto, driven to the railroad
651 station, and placed on board a train.
798 Bishop Matulionis was arrested in mid-December 1946. The old martyr bore himself with dignity and firmness. To warnings by well-wishers he replied: "I know the bolsheviks." He had ordained some divinity graduates December 9 and 12th, and appeared very weak. He was arrested a few days later for having issued a pastoral letter warning against the wiles of Komsomol.

Arrests of the clergy are more numerous after several visits to "Prime Minister" Gedvila to protest against limiting the number of divinity students to 150. The seminary's building is being requisitioned: its quarters in Marian Fathers' Charity Church are being turned over to Nurses School.

A favorite Russian method is to promote dissension. When Rev. Nagulevičius, pastor of Obeliai, was arrested, the NKDV lodged a suspended priest in the rectory. This "pastor" refused to admit the priest appointed by the bishop. The Chancellor of the diocese arrived to settle the matter, but the NKVD "pastor" refused to obey. When the Chancellor visited comrade Gailevičius, Adviser on Cult Affairs in Vilnius, the latter said: "At present the people rule. This is apparently the people's will, and we cannot help in this matter."

The NKVD is attempting to install its own "priests" and, eventually, to have a Church administration subservient to the NKVD. Thus far, only one apostate is known.

No priests are admitted to the Klaipėda-Memel District.

● [794] Congregations are being evicted from their quarters although, officially, the monasteries are not banned. St. Casimir's Sisters are still in possession in Pažaislis, and the Franciscan Fathers are still left in Kretinga.

[651] Priests and Church property are heavily taxed. For instance, the Cathedral of Kaunas must pay 46,000 rubles, the Cathedral of Panevėžys 40,000, the small Church of St. Nicholas in Vilnius dating back to the 14th century, is taxed 16,000 rubles. The late Mgr. Jokubauskas, administrator of the Bishopric of Kaunas who died in February 1947, was taxed 20,000 rubles. The figures become significant when it is realized that an average laborer earns 200 rubles a month.

Sidelights of Anti-Religious Drive

659 Religious practice is permitted inside the church
626 only: Stalin's constitution grants "freedom of belief"
798 and warrants the liberty of anti-religious propaganda. No religious texts, not even prayerbooks, are permitted to be published—"paper shortage" . . . On the other hand millions of vile pamphlets are printed.

Once more, uniformed sentinels and agents in mufti are ostentatiously posted at church doors. They look over every face and scribble notes in the "blocnotes." [558] Attendance in church means dismissal from a responsible post in the government. Teachers attending religious services are denounced in the press as "persons of low morality." A high school director inquired of